

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000018

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR SA/FO AMBASSADOR QUINN, S/CT, SA/A
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, KAMEND
CENTCOM FOR POLAD, CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76
TREASURY FOR LMCDONALD, WBALDRIDGE, APARAMESWARAN, ABAUKOL
STATE PLEASE PASS USAID
USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MOVES FORWARD

REF: KABUL 5219

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The tone of the second week for Afghanistan's National Assembly (NA) has been positive, with members of parliament open to new ideas and mostly constructive debate. The NA spent the week finalizing its leadership and discussing its rules of procedure. The formation of caucuses and committee assignments - informally already in progress - will be discussed next week prior to an approximately 10-day break for the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday. END SUMMARY.

Internal Organization Dominates Business

2. (SBU) The business of parliament remained focused on internal organization. The leadership of both houses of parliament was completed with the election of secretaries (see para 6 for complete list of leaders). Overall, the leadership of both houses lies politically in the center and has been working well together.

3. (SBU) MPs have made some changes to parliamentary rules of procedure previously drafted by the Parliament's professional staff with the assistance of international advisors. MPs expanded the number of committees in each house to match the number of ministries, and adjusted the numbers required to form a caucus ("political group," renamed "parliamentary group" in the Wolesi Jirga (WJ)), but accepted rules governing the civility of debate. The desire of MPs in the WJ to debate the rules of procedure article-by-article may slow up the next agenda items of the formation of caucuses and committees, although informal discussions have already begun.

Ambassador Offers Congratulations to Speakers

4. (SBU) In separate meetings with WJ Speaker Yunus Qanooni and Meshrano Jirga Speaker Sebghatullah Mojaddedi, Ambassador Neumann stressed the US commitment to continued support for the institution of the National Assembly, and continued policy of non-interference in its internal politics. Both Mojaddedi and Qanooni expressed their interest in US aid and training, and stated that business was proceeding smoothly, if sometimes slowly, in parliament. Both also agreed that training programs should come after the selection of caucuses and committees and that international visits by MPs should not occur until more time has passed. Qanooni reiterated his renunciation of his self-appointed position as head of the opposition and stated in believable terms that he hopes to work well with President Karzai and the executive branch. Mojaddedi stated that he intends to continue in his role as head of the Taliban reconciliation program (PTS), and was positive about its progress and acceptance by former Taliban. He will be in Turkey for medical treatment for two to three weeks beginning January 3.

Comment

5. (SBU) Observers within and outside the National Assembly were unanimous in their optimism about the first weeks of business. While Malalai Joya made headlines on the first day of debate for a poorly received statement attacking the human rights abuses committed by various MPs in the past, debate overall has been constructive, with positive contributions from sometimes unexpected sources. In a separate meeting with Poloffs, one Secretariat Office Director said that he was very surprised at how well the MPs were working together. The Assembly has yet to stumble on any notable political issues, but has yet to truly address policy matters. The constructive attitude displayed by many MPs, however, bodes well for the future. END COMMENT.

List of National Assembly Leadership

16. (U) Wolesi Jirga:

Speaker: Yunus Qanooni (Tajik from Panjshir)
First Deputy Speaker: Arif Noorzai (Pashtun from Kandahar)
Second Deputy Speaker: Fawzia Koofi (Woman; Tajik from Badakhshan)
First Secretary: Mohammed Rahman Aughli (Uzbek from Faryab)
Second Secretary: Dr. Mohammad Salih Saljoqi (Tajik from Herat)
Meshrano Jirga:

Speaker: Sebaghtullah Mojaddedi (Presidential Appointee; Tajik from Kabul)
First Deputy Speaker: Hamid Gailani (Presidential Appointee; Pashtun from Kabul)
Second Deputy Speaker: Dr. Burhanullah Shinwari (Elected by the Provincial Council (PC) from Nangarhar)
First Secretary: Mawlawi Aminullah Mozafari (Elected by the PC from Kapisa)
Second Secretary: Abdul Khaleq Hussaini (Elected by the PC from Laghman)
NEUMANN